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Reagan's 'Foreign Agent' Claim About Freeze Based on Magazine
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WASHINGTON

President Reagan's claim that Soviet agents are partly behind the American campaign for a nuclear weapons freeze was apparently based on similar allegations about the peace movement in Western Europe and on an article in Reader's Digest, one of his favorite magazines.

When Reagan's assertion at a news conference last week was questioned, the White House produced a list of published materials in an attempt to document the president's statement. Those materials, however, contain few references to the domestic freeze campaign. And what little evidence they do cite relates to the charge that the Soviet Union has sought to stir up opposition to deployment of the neutron warhead and modern nuclear weapons in Europe.

According to the White House press office, Reagan also had in mind a recent Reader's Digest article when he told reporters that "there is plenty of evidence" that foreign agents have helped organize major pro-freeze demonstrations.

That article, written by John Barron and published in the October issue, named five Soviet officials, three of them United Nations diplomats, one embassy official and an official of the Soviet Institute for the U.S.A. and Canada who were said to have participated in disarmament conferences in the United States. The article identified them as agents of the KGB, the Soviet secret police.

Shortly after the allegations appeared, however, leaders of the freeze movement charged that they were misleading because the officials named had been invited to appear and present their nation's views during public programs and had not participated in the planning or organization of the events.

Reagan's charges have drawn demands, in Congress and elsewhere, for hard evidence of infiltration. Sen. Gary Hart, D-Colo., and a member of the Armed Services Committee, asked Chairman John Tower, R-Texas, on Wednesday to request the administration to produce its proof at a closed hearing. "The conclusions the president has drawn from this evidence are so serious that I believe he should share it ... with the Armed Services Committee," Hart said. Tower did not immediately answer the written request.

When Reagan was pressed for more detail at his news conference, he said, "I can't go beyond what I've done because I don't discuss intelligence matters." A well-placed White House official said, however, that the information to which Reagan was referring served only to further document what was in the published reports.

Earlier, Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., a sponsor of a nuclear freeze resolution, declared that "I have not seen or been aware of any communist or KGB member (in the movement) and I've literally looked behind the doors and in the closet. If President Reagan has evidence of infiltration, he owes it to the American people ... to disclose the evidence so that we may eject or expel those infiltrators."

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